

1           1. (Three times amended) A method comprising the steps of:  
2           maintaining a database of personal information relating to  
3           a consumer, the personal information having been previously  
4           provided by the consumer and including [consumer-identified]  
5           preferred providers identified by the consumer or by prior  
6           purchases thereby;  
7           receiving a request initiated by the consumer and  
8           transmitted over a global communication network to a system;  
9           selecting, responsive to the received request initiated by  
10          the consumer and based upon the [personal information relating  
11          to thereto] request and the preferred providers in the database,  
12          at least one name of at least one provider; and  
13          forwarding the selected at least one name of the at least  
14          one provider from said system to said consumer, wherein said  
15          consumer is subsequently capable of choosing a provider from the  
16          selected at least one provider to communicate therewith.

1           4. (Amended) The method of Claim [1] 2, wherein said step  
2           of selecting further includes the step of using a name linking  
3           policy to select the at least one name of the at least one  
4           provider while utilizing one or a combination of subject matter  
5           information, demographic information and geographic information.

1           18. (Three times amended) A system comprising:

2           a database for storing [consumer-provided] information  
3 associated with a consumer, the information including [consumer-  
4 identified] preferred providers identified by the consumer or by  
5 prior purchases made thereby; and

6           a server for receiving a request initiated by said consumer  
7 and transmitted over a global communication network, said server  
8 further including:

9           a module for selecting, responsive to the received  
10 request and based upon said [information associated with  
11 said consumer and] request and said preferred providers  
12 stored in the database, at least one name of at least one  
13 provider; and

14           a controller for forwarding the selected at least one  
15 name of the at least one provider to said consumer, wherein  
16 said consumer is then capable of choosing a provider from  
17 the selected at least one provider to communicate and,  
18 optionally, complete a business transaction therewith.

1           25. (Three times amended) A method for providing a consumer  
2 with a customized presentation containing the names of various  
3 providers of goods and services that are selected, said method  
4 comprising the steps of:

5 storing, within an intermediary system, consumer-provided  
6 information associated with said consumer[, the information  
7 including consumer-identified preferred providers];

8 receiving a request initiated by said consumer and  
9 transmitted over a global communication network to said  
10 intermediary system;

11 selecting, responsive to the received request and based  
12 upon said information associated with said consumer and stored  
13 in said intermediary system, at least one name of at least one  
14 provider;

15 forwarding the selected at least one name of the at least  
16 one provider within a customized presentation to said consumer,  
17 wherein said consumer is then capable of choosing a provider  
18 from the selected at least one provider to communicate and,  
19 optionally, transact business therewith; [and]

20 operating, within said intermediary system, as an  
21 intermediary between said consumer and said chosen provider; and  
22 updating he information associated with the consumer based  
23 upon a provider chosen thereby with which to transact business.

1 37. (Amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

2 maintaining a database of personal information relating to  
3 a consumer, the personal information including a list of at  
4 least one preferred provider of goods or services;

5 receiving a search request initiated by the consumer over  
6 a global communications network, the request identifying a type  
7 of goods or services;

8 identifying one or more providers of the type of goods or  
9 services requested based upon the at least one preferred  
10 provider;

11 presenting the one or more providers to the consumer; [and]

12 enabling the consumer to complete a transaction with a  
13 provider from the one or more providers chosen by the consumer  
14 [using the personal information in the database]; and

15 updating the list of at least one preferred provider based  
16 upon the one or more providers chosen by the consumer to  
17 complete the transaction.

1 45. (Amended) An apparatus for facilitating a transaction  
2 between a consumer and a provider of goods or services over  
3 communications network, the apparatus being adapted to:

4 maintain a database of personal information relating to a  
5 consumer;

6           receive a search request initiated by the consumer over a  
7           global communications network, the request identifying a type of  
8           goods or services, the search request having a single set of  
9           characters forming a plurality of fields, a first field having  
10          a common name as between different search requests and a second  
11          field identifying the type of goods or services to be searched  
12          without specifying a specific provider of goods or services;  
13          identify, responsive only to the search request without  
14          additional search information being directly provided by the  
15          consumer, one or more providers of the type of goods or services  
16          requested, the one or more providers being identified based upon  
17          the personal information relating to the consumer in the  
18          database;  
19          present the one or more providers to the consumer; and  
20          enable the consumer to complete a transaction with a  
21          provider from the one or more providers chosen by the consumer  
22          using the personal information in the database.

1           53. (Amended) A method comprising the steps of:  
2           maintaining a database of personal information relating to  
3           a consumer;  
4           receiving a request initiated by the consumer and  
5           transmitted over a global communication network to a system,

6 said request having a [domain name associated with a plurality  
7 of domain names each of which includes a common domain name  
8 element, said domain name] single set of characters forming a  
9 plurality of fields, a first field having a common name as  
10 between different requests and a second field identifying  
11 [goods/services] a type of goods or services without identifying  
12 a specific provider thereof;

13 selecting, responsive only to the received request  
14 initiated by the consumer without additional search information  
15 being directly provided by the consumer and based upon the  
16 personal information relating [to] thereto in the database, at  
17 least one name of at least one provider; and

18 forwarding the selected at least one name of the at least  
19 one provider from said system to said consumer, wherein said  
20 consumer is subsequently capable of choosing a provider from the  
21 selected at least one provider to communicate therewith.  
22

1 61. (Amended) A system comprising:

2 a database for storing information associated with a  
3 consumer;

4 a server for receiving a request initiated by said consumer  
5 and transmitted over a global communication network, the request

6 comprising a single set of characters representative of typed  
7 text, the typed text including a first field having a common  
8 name as between different requests and a second field for [,  
9 said request including a domain name associated with a plurality  
10 of domain names each of which includes a common domain name  
11 element, said domain name] identifying [goods/services] at least  
12 one type of goods or services without identifying a specific  
13 provider thereof, said server further including:

14 a module for selecting, responsive to the received  
15 request without additional information directly provided by the  
16 consumer and based upon personal information relating to the  
17 consumer in the database, at least one name of at least one  
18 provider; and

19 a controller for forwarding the selected at least one  
20 name of the at least one provider to said consumer, wherein said  
21 consumer is thereafter enabled to choose a provider from the  
22 selected at least one provider to communicate and selectively  
23 complete a transaction therewith.

Please add the following new claims 73-<sup>79</sup>77.

1 73. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising  
2 updating the personal information relating to the consumer in  
3 the database so that the preferred providers are updated to

4 reflect the consumer choosing a provider from the selected at  
5 least one provider to communicate therewith.

1 74. (New) The method of claim 73, wherein the step of  
2 updating automatically updates the personal information  
3 relating to the consumer in the database so that the preferred  
4 providers are updated to reflect the consumer choosing a  
5 provider from the selected at least one provider to  
6 communicate therewith.

1 75. (New) The system of claim 18, wherein the system  
2 automatically updates the information associated with the  
3 consumer and stored in the database so that the preferred  
4 providers are updated to reflect the consumer choosing a  
5 provider from the selected at least one provider with which to  
6 complete a transaction.

1 76. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the personal  
2 information relating to the consumer maintained in the  
3 database is includes a list of a plurality of consumer-  
4 provided names of one or more providers with which the  
5 consumer prefers to transact business, and the list is updated